

# JSMF Public Radio News

*Radio for People Who Listen*

A Publication of the Jack Straw Foundation

November 1989

Johanna I. Sturm

## "From Composer to Performance":

### Documentary explores the Creation of New Music

Classical music may be the concert musician's benefactor, but creating new music is often his or her passion—the desire made all the more ardent by the challenge of getting it from page to performance. The composer not only gives birth to a new work, but must have the audacity to convince others to participate in the birthing.

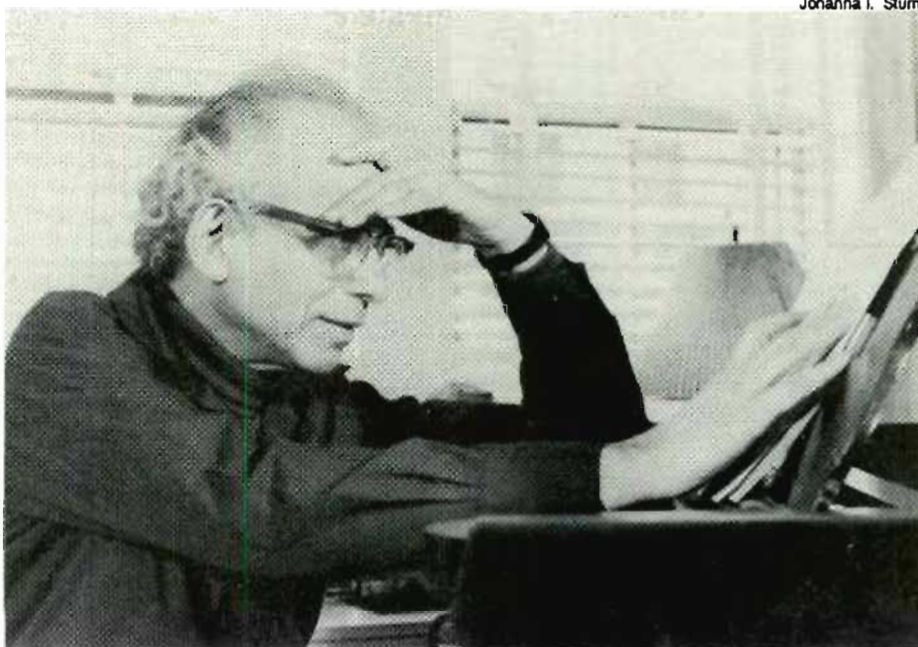
"From Composer to Performance," is an upcoming public radio documentary exploring how four composers joined artistic forces with conductors and musicians to prepare new chamber music for Performa '87, a Pacific Northwest festival of new works produced by King County Arts Commission.

Producer and host Joan Rabinowitz says she believes being aware of the rehearsal process can enrich an audience member's experience of new music. And in being aware, spawn an appreciation for new music that has only recently begun to grow in America. "The place of new music is not secure in this country," she says. "If you want to do that, you really have to be committed."

The four-part series will be broadcast locally on four consecutive Fridays, beginning November 10 at 10:00 a.m. on KBCS, 91.3 FM, (see schedule on page 2) during American Music Week. The week-long celebration of new contemporary American music is promoted by the American Music Center in New York City and first observed in 1985. It has helped focus more attention on new music among radio stations, concert halls and audiences.

The series balances music with narration. Rabinowitz's interviews are engag-

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George Perle's "Lyric Intermezzo" is featured in "From Composer to Performance".

## FCC Delay for KSER

A request by KSER-FM for a new transmitter site in Snohomish County has been delayed in the Federal Communications Commission review process. The FCC delay means that Community / Public radio will be coming to Snohomish County a few months later than expected.

This kind of delay is not unusual in broadcasting, especially in areas close to the Canadian border. The request for change in transmitter site has been on file for over a year, but procedures for locating a station on the crowded FM radio band are complicated and technical. Recently the FCC received an emergency budget allocation from Congress to complete work in progress and to hire additional staff.

The Foundation's Washington, D.C. Attorneys and Consulting Engineers met with the FCC Chief of the FM Division to ensure that our application for transmitting KSER-FM will now proceed as quickly as possible.

We will plan to keep you informed of all news received from the FCC.

## Jack Straw moves to University District

From a donut shop to a firehouse, to an old department store at 23rd and Jackson, Jack Straw has packed and unpacked his bags a number of times over the years. By Thanksgiving of this year the Foundation will be operating in yet another new home in the University District. The purchase of the Warren building marks the Foundation's latest commitment to providing a well equipped studio and training facility for independent producers and audio artists of the Northwest.

The decision to purchase the Warren Building was based on several factors: It's location will provide easy access to the many lectures and readings sponsored by the University, expertise in all topics, as well as a large concentrated community of potential volunteers.

The new building is spacious, requiring modest renovation to meet our needs for staff, archives and production space. Included in the blueprint are plans for a large

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## KSER Advisory Committee Appointed

On June 22, twelve newly-appointed members of KSER citizens' Advisory Committee sat down with the Jack Straw Board of Directors to get acquainted and lay the groundwork for building a strong, responsive community station.

All Advisory committee members are involved in community affairs and support the goals of broadcast diversity and quality represented by the Jack Straw Foundation policies. They've been asked to serve as a major, two-way communication link, spreading the concept of listener-supported radio throughout the community and bringing back to the KSER staff a clear sense of local issues, tastes and areas of support.

Community Advisory Committee members are: **Robert Anderson**; Edmonds, musician and conductor of the Cascade Symphony Orchestra. **Steve Burr**; Everett, Citizen-involvement activist and manager with Intermec Corporation. **Diego Gavilanes**; Everett, attorney and volunteer with refugee support groups. **Laura Hall**; Edmonds, Edmonds City Council member and arts advocate. **Linda Jones**; Marysville, member and Tribal Services Manager for the Tulalip Tribe. **Ewell Madry**; Everett, trucker at Scott Paper Company, formerly a jazz and rhythm & blues programmer at KRCL-FM, Salt Lake City, Utah. **Margaret Riddle**; Everett, historic archive librarian at the Everett Public Library and music collector. **Jim Rondeau**; Everett, student and professional broadcaster at KUBE, Seattle. **Paul Shaner**; Kenmore, social worker and Program Director with Northshore Youth and Family Services. **Doris Sinclair**; Lake Stevens, mental health therapist and radio interview program host at KBAE, Everett. **James Sneddon**; Lynnwood, photographer, media producer and director of the Prima Art Gallery at Edmonds Community College. **Nancy Wels**; Everett, professional volunteer in human services.

## Kudos for Herb Levy!!

The King County Arts Commission recently presented Herb Levy (Jack Straw Foundation Board Member) with a Special Service Award for distinguished contributions to the Arts in King County.

The award was given in recognition for Herb's facilitation of "this region's growing reputation as a center for the presentation and development of new music."

## Audio Description Service Gives Unique Perspective

"As a professional in the field of performing arts, I was amazed by the unique perspective that audio description could give," said Susan Phillips-Vincent. Susan is one of many visually impaired people who used the Audio-Description Service at Intiman Theatre this year.

The service, produced by Jesse Minkert and Joan Rabinowitz, consists of two parts. A pre-show program tape filled with information about the play in which listeners hear the voices of actors in character, as well as the directors and designers of the set, details on costumes, and background on the actors.

In the second part, a narrator gives blind audience members full access to the play by describing important actions, significant glances or gestures and visual jokes.

The Audio-Description Service, in its third year, received support from the Jack Straw Foundation, Equal Time, the King County Arts Commission, and the Washington State Arts Commission.

The value of the service is best communicated in the words of Joy Iverson, "I cannot express how much more complete the plays are to a blind person because of the audio description on stage. As a blind person myself, having the audio description of each performance really completes the theater experience."

## "Composer to Performance" Broadcast Schedule

**KBCS Bellevue/Seattle: FRIDAYS 10 AM**

Nov. 10: George Perle and the Seattle Symphony

Nov. 17: William O. Smith and the Soni Ventorum

Nov. 24: Paul Chihara at the Nippon Kan Theatre

Dec. 1: Karen Thomas and the New Performance Group

Also to be broadcast on:

**KUOW Seattle:** Tuesday - Friday, December 26-29, 3 p.m.

**KUGS Bellingham:** Four consecutive Mondays beginning November 6, 10 a.m.

**KAOS Olympia:** Four consecutive Fridays, beginning November 10, time to be announced

**KSVR Mount Vernon:** Four consecutive Thursdays, beginning November 9, 11 a.m.



**COMPOSER** continued from front page  
ing and informative, providing an insight into the thrill and terror of breathing life into a work which has never before been explored.

From employing traditional rehearsal techniques to creating a computerized musical notation system, the artists illustrate contrasting means by which new music can be lifted from the page and into performance.

"The program begins with Pulitzer winner George Perle's "Lyric Intermezzo," performed by 15 members of the Seattle Symphony. Here, a mainstream contemporary composer, conductor and musicians followed traditional methods of rehearsal. "It's the conductor's business to understand what the composer wants," Perle says. "Musicians must then add the magic to make the piece come alive," notes Rabinowitz.

Jazz musician, composer and clarinetist William O. "Bill" Smith, known for his theatrical and experimental music, took his musicians into uncharted territory with "Illuminated Manuscripts." By creating a new computerized musical notation system, Smith made it possible for members of the

Soni Ventorum woodwind Quintet to perform in more than one tempo at the same time. While the musicians performed their parts displayed on individual computer screens, audience members could follow the music "illuminated" on a large screen on stage.

Without Performa, Paul Chihara's subtly Oriental "Serenade" might never have been created. After years of wanting to commission a new work by Chihara, but lacking the funds, the Nippon Kan Heritage Association received a New Music Performing Arts grant from KCAC in association with Performa '87. The excitement created by Chihara's piece in Seattle's Japanese community was especially meaningful to the composer who grew up in that district.

The series culminates with Karen Thomas' robust and quintessentially American, "There Must be a Lone Ranger," a musical inspired in part by the poetry of E. E. Cummings and performed by the New Performance Group, in residence at Cornish College of the Arts. In addition to working with a conductor and musicians, Thomas had to

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## GOOD RADIO

*This column began with the idea that interesting radio is a growing force around Puget Sound. Each issue we like to feature your opinions on what makes good radio and where it can be found.*

Let's talk about talk programming. In the documentary and reporting vein, there is probably no better international coverage in the world than on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's 3-hour Sunday magazine: "Sunday Morning." The program is built around 20-30 minute documentaries on Canadian, American and world political issues, and arts and personality coverage as well. If you live close enough to Canada, you can get it at 9 a.m. from CBU, Vancouver, 690 on the AM dial. If you live in Seattle, and can manage to drag yourself out of bed at 6 a.m. Sunday, you can hear this excellent program on KCMU-FM, 90.3. If you want to hear the program at a better time slot, let them know. KCMU is the student-operated station at the University of Washington.

Last newsletter, I asked for your observations on local good radio. Former KRAB announcer Chris Melgard responded with the following. "It's easy to get caught up with the KING-AM talk show host Jim Althoff, from 9 a.m. to noon on weekdays. He has a quick mind, a well-read background and a ready command of the language. His subjects are usually current, like oil spills, cutting old growth, or gun control, and he will present people who know about these things.

When he begins an interview, he adopts a contrary position and this gets his guest going. His preparation is surprisingly thorough; he doesn't just coast along as do so many talk show hosts. He keeps discussion lively with skillful questioning of guests and gracious treatment of callers. If, in your enthusiasm for the program, you write Mr. Althoff, he will dependably answer with a postcard."

How about others of you keen radio heads out there? Is Althoff the best talk show host around? Should talk show hosts use their programs to advocate and organize? Does this electronic platform for diverse ideas have any affect on our social and political climate?

## KSER-FM Surveys Community Issues People Network Expands

KSER-FM is not yet on the air in Snohomish county, but the station continues to grow in the minds and activities of supporters in the community. While the foundation awaits final clearance from the FCC, the staff is recruiting volunteer support from an office in Everett's Medical-Dental Building at 2722 Colby (Phone # 252-6505).

KSER's listening area stretches from northern King county, throughout Snohomish county and into parts of Island, Jefferson and Skagit counties. It encom-

Jens Lund, WA Folklife Council



"I was just sitting on the couch one day and pressed on the accordion and finally made out a waltz. I kind of liked it and I called it the Centralia Waltz 'cause that's where I live."

passes nearly half-a-million people in communities as different from one another as Lynnwood, Snohomish, Everett, Arlington, Edmonds and Granite Falls. Ron Putnam, Jack Straw's Chief Engineer is also looking for 10-watt translator sites that will extend the signal even further north and west.

During the past 3 months, KSER has gained a 12-member Citizens Advisory Committee. They in turn, are extending station contacts to dozens of community leaders while doing a survey of community issues and needs.

On the programming front, Broadcast Director Nancy Keith is recruiting producers for local public affairs programs. "I'm constantly told that Snohomish county needs a focal point for coverage and discussion of local issues," she says. "We're planning a



nightly program strip that will feature regular shows with news, interviews, commentaries, reviews and coming events on a variety of specific topics. This will be our way of covering local news with volunteer producers. We hope to supplement that with network news from alternative national and international sources."

Publicity for KSER has been primarily through word of mouth. "Until we get a specific on-air date," Keith says, "we're building our organization through a people network. As soon as we hear from the FCC, we'll be ready with a public information campaign." In the meantime, KSER has a new logo designed by Paulette Chun.

## Washington Folks tell their stories in new series

"A long time ago when the earth was young and the people and animals lived together, there was one magic person that we called Huana..." begins Curtis Dupuis, a Chehalis Indian, as he tells the story of Brown Bird. Curtis is one of several "folks" from around the state featured on "Washington Folk," a series of 10 short radio programs produced by folklorist Jens Lund and the Washington Folklife Council.

From cowboy poets to Hutterite singers, the series includes locals like Curtis Dupuis and Elaine Frank Davison, a second generation Volga German-American known for her genealogical research about her family and other families in her community.

"Washington Folk" is produced in conjunction with radio producer Joan Rabinowitz and the Jack Straw Foundation. Currently being broadcast on radio stations in Washington and Oregon, the series received support from the Washington Commission for the Humanities, KAOS-FM, the Littlefield Foundation, the Washington State Arts Commission, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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a nonprofit organization.

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studio fit for recording local and visiting musicians in addition to production of radio dramas and other large scale projects. Special workspace for volunteers, independent producers, and novice radio personnel looking to develop their trade is also being planned.

The top two floors of the Warren Building are leased out to other non-profit organizations in need of space. Currently there are six tenants and space available for two others. This opportunity allows us to produce income while maintaining a supportive relationship with other non-profit groups in the area.

The new building is a step away from the completed production facility we are all aching and hungry for. In the meantime, the Jackson Street building will remain under JSF's ownership and be leased to three different tenants. It is time to gather belongings for the winter and prepare for a fruitful spring.

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communicate her vision of the musical to a theatrical director.

"There was very little indication in the music as to what to do with the theatrics," says soprano Thomasa Eckert. "We made all that up ourselves...and Karen was really open to that, she gave us that freedom." The musicians, dressed in cowboy regalia and mooing as they took their places on stage, were asked to do more than perform music. "Right away the instrumentalists loved it," says Eckert. "It gave them a chance to sing and to participate in ways that made them feel that they also grew from the experience."

"From Composer to Performance" encourages one to nurture and delight in the musical offspring born of these artists' passion to create.

By Denise Jarrett

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